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Agenda item 4

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

Letter dated 26 March 1996 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights

I enclose my memorandum* which has been distributed today in the Commission on Human Rights and sent to the Chairman and the delegations participating in the fifty-second session of the Commission on Human Rights.

I will be very grateful if you would kindly make the arrangements to consider and make it one of the official documents before the Commission at its ongoing session.

(Signed) Nabil Ramlawi
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations

* The enclosure is reproduced as received, in the original languages only.

Annex

Referring to my statement before your distinguished Commission on March 19th, 1996, under item 4 of our agenda, Human Rights Violations in the Occupied Palestinian and Arab Territories, and in view of the continued deterioration of the situation of human rights in this region - ominous of an explosion of incalculable dimensions - I would like to place before you the following facts, hoping your Commission could initiate measures to contain the situation.

First: Israel has continued, for four weeks, to impose collective punishments on over two million Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The measures imposed by Israel include a total military blockade against the Palestinian people and the demolition of Palestinian houses, a matter which has resulted in the death of a number of civilians and which threatens others with a similar fate. In this, Israel violates the principles of International Law, the provisions of International Humanitarian Law, the terms of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and the provisions of the International Convention for the Prevention and the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide which, in article 2, considers as a crime of genocide: the deliberate subjection of a group of people to living conditions intended to totally or partially destroy this group.

Second: Once again, Israel has renewed its military occupation of several rural areas from which it had withdrawn under the terms of the Declaration of Principles signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). In this, Israel persists in violating the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of land by force, an act which constitutes a threat to the peace and security of mankind.

Third: Furthermore, Israel has reverted to its policy of deporting Palestinian citizens, violating thus the provisions of article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which considers such violations as massive.

Fourth: Israel attached no importance to the terms already agreed upon with the PLO, in this violating its agreements and accords with the PLO.

Fifth: Israel attached no importance to the requests addressed to it by the Palestine National Authority to resume negotiations within the framework of peace process. Currently, no political negotiations are underway.

Sixth: As a result of the continued imposition of collective punishments through a blockade affecting the totality of the Palestinian people, President Yasser Arafat, the President of the Palestine National Authority, warned yesterday that the continued Israeli practices, placing the Palestinian people under living conditions aimed at destroying it through hunger and deprivation of food and medicine, will result in a massive explosion whose fallouts will have effects beyond the region.

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Heads and Members of Delegation,

On behalf of the besieged Palestinian people, we call upon you to appeal to Israel, on behalf of the Commission on Human Rights, to lift the blockade imposed against the Palestinian people, and to put an end to the destruction of Palestinian houses in order to avert a catastrophe with far reaching humanitarian effects in the region.